



Introduction — Home Recovery

In most of the disasters discussed in this manual, it is unlikely that a family's home would be entirely destroyed. There are exceptions, of course, most particularly fire, hurricane, and tornado. Usually, however, the home suffers some structural damage and partial to total loss of the home's contents. Even a partial loss of prized belongings, important papers, photos, and so on can be devastating.

In this section, the focus will be on recovery after damage to and/or loss of a home and its contents. Flood waters, for instance, bring not only water to damage walls, floors, furnishings, etc., they also bring sand, silt, muck, debris of many kinds, and wild animals, particularly snakes, directly into the home.

How do you get all of this out of your house, along with the stains left behind? What do you tell a distraught caller to the Extension office, looking for help to remove poisonous snakes in every downstairs room of the house? Or, in another likely scenario, how does a caller remove raccoons which have taken up residence in the house and are destroying furnishings, draperies, wall coverings, etc. with their teeth and sharp claws? How do you advise clients—or your own family—what to do and how to proceed with the best methods when it's time to clean up and salvage carpet, furniture, clothes, etc.?

Chapter 4 contains useful information about dealing with wildlife after a storm (also, most counties have a nuisance wildlife control officer). Consult Chapter 5 for helpful information about cleaning up and recovering your property after a disaster.

Although the worst may have passed when the disaster is over, the process of recovering requires great patience.

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